

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~order confirmation in~~ an independent supply chain management system generating alerts for the purpose of managing a franchise supply chain,~~that may or may not mandate store distributor relationships in a supply chain,~~ comprising:

a) an independent supply chain manager receiving an authorization to negotiate prices for the provision of products by distributors to independent stores in the franchise supply chain;

b) the independent supply chain manager negotiating with a distributor a mark up amount to be added to a cost of products obtained from a supplier;

c) the independent supply chain management system collecting sales data from a plurality of independent stores of a supply chain utilizing a network on at least a daily basis, the data relating to the sale of goods by the independent stores;

d) allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;

e) electronically tracking the sales data against forecasted sales;

f) generating a first alert if a deviation of the sales data relative to the forecasted sales exceeds a threshold;

g) the independent supply chain management system generating and then sending out directly or indirectly via at least one of the independent stores to a distributor an electronic order form to be fulfilled to the at least one of the independent stores based on the sales data relating to multiple completed sales of goods by ~~a-the at least one independent~~ store of the supply chain, the electronic order form requesting a confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form to be sent upon receipt of and prior to fulfillment of the order;

h) determining whether the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form is received by the independent supply chain management system from the distributor;

i) the independent supply chain management system generating ~~an~~ a second alert upon determining that the independent supply chain management system did not receive the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form from the distributor;

j) the independent supply chain management system determining a mark up added to the products delivered to one of the independent stores;

k) the independent supply chain management system comparing the mark up added to the mark up negotiated by the independent supply chain manager; and

l) generating a third alert if a discrepancy is found.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the confirmation is received utilizing the network.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the network includes the Internet.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the alerts are ~~is~~ transmitted to the stores utilizing the network.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein one of the alerts is displayed on the network-based interface.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein one of the alerts includes an electronic mail message.

7. (Currently Amended) A system for ~~order confirmation in~~ an independent supply chain management system generating alerts for the purpose of managing a franchise supply chain, ~~that may or may not mandate store-distributor relationships in a supply chain,~~ comprising:

an electronic storage; and

a set of processors that use the electronic storage and include among them the following logic elements

- a) logic for an independent supply chain manager receiving an authorization to negotiate prices for the provision of products by distributors to independent stores in the franchise supply chain;
- b) logic for the independent supply chain manager negotiating with a distributor a mark up amount to be added to a cost of products obtained from a supplier;
- c) logic for the independent supply chain management system collecting sales data from a plurality of independent stores of a supply chain utilizing a network on at least a daily basis, the data relating to the sale of goods by the independent stores;
- d) logic for allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;
- e) logic for electronically tracking the sales data against forecasted sales;
- f) logic for generating a first alert if a deviation of the sales data relative to the forecasted sales exceeds a threshold;
- g) logic for the independent supply chain management system generating and then sending out directly or indirectly via at least one of the independent stores to a distributor an electronic order form to be fulfilled to at least the one of the independent stores based on the sales data relating to multiple completed sales of goods by a-the at least one independent store of the supply chain, the electronic order form requesting a confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form to be sent upon receipt of and prior to fulfillment of the order;
- h) logic for determining whether the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form is received by the independent supply chain management system from the distributor;
- i) logic for the independent supply chain management system generating an a second alert upon determining that the independent supply chain management system did not receive the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form from the distributor;
- j) logic for the independent supply chain management system determining a mark up added to the products delivered to one of the independent stores;
- k) logic for the independent supply chain management system comparing the mark up added to the mark up negotiated by the independent supply chain manager; and
- l) logic for generating a third alert if a discrepancy is found.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the confirmation is received utilizing the network.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the network includes the Internet.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 7, wherein the alerts are is transmitted to the stores utilizing the network.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein one of the alerts is displayed on the network-based interface.

12. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein one of the alerts includes an electronic mail message.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer program for ~~order confirmation in an independent supply chain management system~~ generating alerts for the purpose of managing a franchise supply chain, that may or may not mandate store distributor relationships in a supply chain, comprising:

a set of computer usable media having computer readable program code embodied therein to be executed by a computer, the computer readable program code comprising:

a) computer code for an independent supply chain manager receiving an authorization to negotiate prices for the provision of products by distributors to independent stores in the franchise supply chain;

b) computer code for the independent supply chain manager negotiating with a distributor a mark up amount to be added to a cost of products obtained from a supplier;

c) computer code for the independent supply chain management system collecting sales data from a plurality of independent stores of a supply chain utilizing a network on at least a daily basis, the data relating to the sale of goods by the independent stores;

d) computer code for allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;

e) computer code for electronically tracking the sales data against forecasted sales;

- f) computer code for generating a first alert if a deviation of the sales data relative to the forecasted sales exceeds a threshold;
- g) computer code for the independent supply chain management system generating and then sending out directly or indirectly via at least one of the independent stores to a distributor an electronic order form to be fulfilled to at least the one of the independent stores based on the sales data relating to multiple completed sales of goods by ~~a~~ at least one independent store of the supply chain, the electronic order form requesting a confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form to be sent upon receipt of and prior to fulfillment of the order;
- h) computer code for determining whether the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form is received by the independent supply chain management system from the distributor;
- i) computer code for the independent supply chain management system generating ~~an~~ a second alert upon determining that the independent supply chain management system did not receive the confirmation of the receipt of the electronic order form from the distributor;
- j) computer code for the independent supply chain management system determining a mark up added to the products delivered to one of the independent stores;
- k) computer code for the independent supply chain management system comparing the mark up added to the mark up negotiated by the independent supply chain manager; and
- l) computer code for generating a third alert if a discrepancy is found.

14. (Original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the confirmation is received utilizing the network.

15. (Original) The computer program product of claim 14, wherein the network includes the Internet.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the alerts are ~~is~~-transmitted to the stores utilizing the network.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 16, wherein one of the alerts is displayed on the network-based interface.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 16, wherein one of the alerts includes an electronic mail message.